

NNNNVV ESA204MJC228
 PP RUQHR
 DE RUSBLK #5244/1 191125Z
 ZNY CCCCC ZZH
 P R 101223Z JUL 79
 FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4649
 INFO RUQMGU/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3653
 RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 507
 RUMJDK/AMEMBASSY DACCA 855
 RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8589
 RUMTRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 329
 RUSBXR/AMCONSUL KARACHI 4236
 RUOTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1668
 RUEKMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1725
 RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7043
 RUSBQD/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 1270
 RUQHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 305
 RUHQHQA/CINCPAC
 RUSNAAA/CINCEUR
 RUFHNA/USNATO 09
 BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 5244

DEPT.: ALSO FOR A/SY/CC

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR PLAD

KARACHI: FOR RSS

E.O. 12065: GDS, 7/10/85 (PLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M
 TAGS: PINS, ASEC, MOPS, PINT, AF
 SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF THE INSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 4325

1. CLOUD INTRODUCTORY NOTE: IN THE JUDGMENT OF THIS EMBASSY, THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE USED TO BRIEF MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS, SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA, OR REPRESENTATIVES OF FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS. ITS OVERALL CLASSIFICATION HAS BEEN KEPT AT CONFIDENTIAL, HOWEVER, SHOULD SOME WASHINGTON AGENCY PREFER THAT CERTAIN MATERIAL BE WITHHELD AT THIS TIME. ALL CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS REPORT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS SENSITIVE. END OF INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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2. CLOUD SUMMARY: AS A HOT, DUSTY SUMMER SETTLES OVER AFGHANISTAN, THE KHALQI REGIME OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA) STILL FACES A SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, INCREASING SPREAD OF REBEL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THE KHALQIS HAVE MET THE MORE SERIOUS REBEL CHALLENGES EFFECTIVELY WITH DECISIVENESS, SPEED, EFFICIENCY, AND RUTHLESSNESS, THE REGIME HAS NOT YET SHOWN ITSELF ABLE TO COPE MILITARILY OR POLITICALLY WITH THE OVERALL INSURGENCY WHICH CONTINUES TO SPREAD AND ERODE GOVERNMENTAL ASSETS. THE VARIOUS REBEL GROUPS STILL LACK SUFFICIENT INTERNAL ORGANIZATION, STRATEGIC COORDINATION WITH EACH OTHER, CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP, MEANINGFUL OUTSIDE SUPPORT, AND AN IDEOLOGICAL- POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE AROUND WHICH THEY CAN COALESCE. LIKE THE KHALQIS, THE REBELS ARE ALSO SUFFERING HIGH ATTRITION RATES IN MEN AND MATERIEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INSURGENT AFGHAN FIFTEENMEN CAN DRAW UPON A LONG TRADITION OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AND THEIR SIMPLE LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS ENABLE THEM TO LIVE OFF THE LAND-- AND WHATEVER THEY CAN PLUNDER FROM GOVERNMENT CONVOYS. ALTHOUGH THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE LOOKS GRIM FOR THE KHALQIS, THE TOUGH, WELL-ORGANIZED PARTY CADRE IS KEEPING THE RANKS OF LOYALISTS FIRM AND DEDICATED -- AND THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES (E.G., THE ARMORED CORPS, ELITE COMMANDO UNITS, AND THE AIR FORCE) CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE REGIME. THE SITUATION, ALTHOUGH SERIOUS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE LEFTISTS, IS NOT YET BAD ENOUGH TO TRIGGER A KHALQI PLEA FOR THE DIRECT ASSISTANCE OF SOVIET MILITARY UNITS. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO COUNT OUT THE TOUGH AND DETERMINED TARAKI-AMIN LEADERSHIP. END OF SUMMARY..

3. CLOUD THE MILITARY SITUATION: GUERRILLA ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE PROVINCES OF AFGHANISTAN. AS WAS THE CASE A MONTH AGO (REFTEL), THE KHALQI REGIME ACTUALLY CONTROLS LESS THAN HALF OF THE COUNTRY -- AND MUCH OF THAT ONLY DURING THE DAYTIME HOURS (AS A REBEL CHIEFTAIN WAS RECENTLY REPORTED TO HAVE SAID: "THE AFGHAN INSURGENCY IS LIKE A GOOD LOVE AFFAIR: MOST OF THE ACTION IS AT NIGHT.") GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATED ON RETENTION OF MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS, MOST OF THE MAJOR ROADS AND COMMUNICATIONS, THE BEST AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS, AND CERTAIN KEY OUTPOSTS WHERE THEIR PRESTIGE IS INVOLVED, SUCH AS MONAR'S PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF ASADABAD (ALSO KNOWN AS CHIGHA SERAI) WHERE ENBATTLED KHALQI TROOPS HAVE FOR MONTHS LOOKED UP AT A PING OF DEFIANTLY WAVING GREEN FLAGS OF ISLAM IN THE SURROUNDING HILLS.

4. CLOUD ALTHOUGH THE KHALQIS CLAIM TO CONTROL THE ROAD FROM THE JALALABAD REGION TO ASADABAD, IT'S A BARE VEHICLE THAT CAN MAKE THAT RISKY TRIP WITHOUT RECEIVING AT LEAST

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RUHJDK/AMEMBASSY DACCA 936

RUSBDQ/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8990

RUQMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 330

RUSBKR/AMCONSUL KARACHI 4237

RUDIC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1669

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1726

RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7044

RUSBDQ/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 1279

RUQMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 306

RUHQHQA/CINCPAC

RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

RUFHNA/USNATO 09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 KABUL 5244

DEPT.: ALSO FOR A/SY/CC

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR PLAD

KARACHI: FOR RSS

E.O. 12065: GDS, 7/10/85 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M

THE BULLET HOLE. A SPECIAL UN PROJECT VEHICLE WAS RECENTLY REMOVED FROM ASADABAD, AND ACQUIRED A SWISS-CHEESE APPEARANCE ON THE WAY OUT, PICKING UP OVER ONE HUNDRED BULLET AND SHELL HOLES. THIS PARTICULAR ROUTE WOULD ILLUSTRATE THE LOWER END OF THE SCALE OF "GOVERNMENT CONTROL." MOST MAIN ROADS ARE USUALLY UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL; HOWEVER, IF THE REBELS SUCCESSFULLY INTERDICT A SECTION OF A KEY HIGHWAY, GOVERNMENT FORCES WILL ORDINARILY CLEAR THE AREA WITHIN THREE OR FOUR HOURS. A FEW ROUTES, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH PASS OVER THE PEPER-INFESTED PAKTIA MOUNTAINS TO THE CHRONICALLY SURROUNDED GOVERNMENT OUTPOST OF KHOST, ARE ONLY RARELY OPEN. THEREFORE, THE KHALQIS RELY UPON AERIAL SUPPORT OF THEIR FORCES IN SUCH CASES.

5. CLOW WHILE THE FIGHTING CONTINUES ON ONLY A LOW LEVEL IN SOME PROVINCES OF THE COUNTRY AT THIS TIME, IT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY FIERCE RECENTLY IN EASTERN PROVINCES OF BADAKHSAN, KONAR, NANGARMAR, PAKTIA, AND PAKTIKA. KHALQI FORCES HAVE LOST AN OCCASIONAL TOWN, WEAPONS, AMMUNITION, VEHICLES, SUPPLIES, AND -- WHAT MUST BE A PARTICULARLY UPPISOME PROBLEM TO THE KABUL LEADERSHIP -- TROOPS AS WELL. EVERY DAY, KHALQI SOLDIERS ARE GETTING KILLED IN ACTION, WOUNDED, LOST, CUT-OFF -- AND, NOT INFREQUENTLY, THEY ARE DEFECTING TO THE REBEL SIDE. RECENTLY, SOME COMPANY-SIZED UNITS HAVE SLIPPED OUT OF KHALQI CONTROL. IN ONE OR TWO CASES, BATTALIONS HAVE DISAPPEARED. THIS HAS LEFT THE REGIME SHORT OF MEN IN MAJOR COMMANDS ALL OVER AFGHANISTAN. POLITICAL PURGES HAVE GUTTED THE OFFICER CORPS, LEAVING CIVILIAN PARTY CADRE OR YOUNG LOYALIST JUNIOR OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF MAJOR MILITARY UNITS -- WITH THE VERY CLOSE AND ACTIVE ASSISTANCE OF THEIR SEVERAL SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS (WHO, AS WAS ALSO THE CUSTOM BEFORE THE KHALQI REVOLUTION, USUALLY WEAR AFGHAN UNIFORMS).

6. CLOW THE REGIME APPEARS TO BE SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL FOR FIGHTING MEN: CONVINCING YOUNG UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO "VOLUNTEER"; IMPRESSING INTO "MILITIA" SERVICE THE ABLE ADULT MALE POPULATIONS OF ENTIRE VILLAGES; PICKING UP CASUAL DAY LABORERS FOUND WAITING ON KABUL STREET CORNERS FOR JOBS, AND PUTTING THEM ON THE FRONT; OR RECALLING THOSE WHO HAD ALREADY COMPLETED THEIR MILITARY OBLIGATIONS. THIS INCREASING SCARCITY OF MILITARY MANPOWER MIRRORS THE SHRINKING NUMBER OF CIVILIAN OFFICIALS IN KABUL'S MINISTRIES AS THE KHALQI-LEADERSHIP CONTINUES ITS SEEMINGLY ENDLESS POLITICAL PURGES. THIS SHORTAGE OF HUMAN RESOURCES GREATLY HAMPERS KHALQI OPERATIONS, BUT THE LEADERSHIP STILL APPEARS TO PLACE ITS HIGHEST PRIORITY ON LOYALTY. (HOWEVER, WE HAVE RECENTLY HEARD A REPORT, AS YET UNCONFIRMED, THAT SEVENTY PERSONS WERE RELEASED FROM PUL-I-CHARKI PRISON ON JULY 8. AMONG THOSE FREED WERE REPORTEDLY SEVERAL FORMER ARMY OFFICERS, SOME OF WHOM HAD BEEN SUSPECTED OF PARCHAMIST SYMPATHIES.)

7. CLOUD NEW SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR THE KHALQIS: THE MOST NOTEWORTHY NEW DEVELOPMENT HERE HAS BEEN THE FIRST TENTATIVE SIGNS THAT THE INSURRECTION MIGHT BE ENTERING THE CITY OF KABUL, ITSELF. ON JUNE 23, A NUMBER OF SMALL, SEEMINGLY UNCOORDINATED -- OR POORLY COORDINATED -- SHOOTING EPISODES BROKE OUT IN VARIOUS PARTS OF KABUL. THE MOST IMPORTANT CONFLICT WAS LAUNCHED BY A GROUP OF SHI'A HAZARAS, WHO SUFFER FROM BEING BOTH AN ETHNIC MINORITY AND A RELIGIOUS MINORITY IN THIS INTOLERANT PUSHTUN AND SUNNI-DOMINATED SOCIETY. THE REBELS APPEARED UNABLE TO LAUNCH WHATEVER THEY HAD IN MIND, HOWEVER, AND THE REGIME RESTORED ORDER SMOOTHLY-- BUT BLOODILY. SINCE THAT DATE, THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN KABUL SEEMS TO HAVE INCREASED SLIGHTLY. SINCE THE 1978 REVOLUTION, ISOLATED GUNFIRE HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN HEARD HERE, BUT SOME OF THE RECENT SHOOTING INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN MORE PROLONGED. ADDITIONALLY, THE REBELS ARE BEGINNING TO AMBUSH MILITARY VEHICLES FROM TIME TO TIME ALONG THE VITAL KABUL-TO-TORKHAM HIGHWAY. COMMUNICATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN CUT OCCASIONALLY ALONG THAT ROUTE. THUS FAR, THE KHALQIS HAVE QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY DEALT WITH THESE NUISANCE RAIDS. THE KHALQI LEADERSHIP AT KABUL CONTINUES TO DISPLAY A CALM, UNRUFFLED, "IN-CHARGE" FACADE TO THE PUBLIC. ASIDE FROM THE FEW INCIDENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE, AND THE FACT THAT THE CITY IS AN ARMED CAMP, KABUL RETAINS A REMARKABLY QUIET, RELAXED, AND PEACEFUL APPEARANCE. THERE IS A DISCERNABLE TENSION UNDER THE SURFACE, HOWEVER.

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TO RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY LASHOO SECURITY 4651

INFO 710110Z JUL 79 AMEMBASSY AMMAN 3655

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY BLING 609

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY BAGDA 657

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8991

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY JORDA 331

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY KARACHI 4236

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1677

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1727

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7445

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY TASHKANT 1264

RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 377

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 MAPUL 5244

DEPT.: ALSO FOR 4/5Y/00

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR PLAN

KARACHI: FOR RSS

E.O. 12665: GDS, 7/12/25 (PLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M

8. WHAT HAVE THE REBELS ACCOMPLISHED THUS FAR? ALTHOUGH SUBJECTED TO HEAVY ATTRACTION AT TIMES -- AND FIGHTING WITHOUT MEANINGFUL OUTSIDE SUPPORT, THE REBELS HAVE MANAGED TO BLOODY THE KHALAI REGIME'S NOSE FREQUENTLY -- AND HAVE RENDERED HOLLOW THE KHALAI LEADERSHIP'S STILL OFT-REPEATED CLAIM THAT THEY ENJOY "THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF 98 PERCENT OF THE AFGHAN POPULATION." ALSO OF INCREASING ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE IS THE FACT THAT INSURRECTIONIST ACTIVITY HAS DISRUPTED AND STALLED MOST OF THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THIS COUNTRY-- THEREBY DEPRIVING THE KHALAIS OF MUCH-NEEDED FOREIGN REMITTANCES.

9. CAN THE KHALAIS HOLD OUT -- OR WILL THEY BE FORCED TO CALL IN THE RUSSIANS? AS OF EARLY JULY, THE KHALAI REGIME, THOUGH EXHAUSTED, STILL SEEMS ABLE TO SURVIVE WITH ITS OWN MILITARY AND POLICE RESOURCES, GIVEN THE CONTINUATION OF GENEROUS MEASURES OF SOVIET MATERIEL AND ADVISORY SUPPORT. THE KHALAIS UNDOUBTEDLY REALIZE THAT TO CALL IN COMBAT TROOPS OF WHAT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN REGARDED HERE AS THE EXPANSIONIST NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH WOULD COMPLETELY DISCREDIT THEM IN THE EYES OF MOST AFGHANS (INCLUDING MANY OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN WILLING TO GIVE THE KHALAIS' MODERNIZING FORCE A CHANCE TO MOVE THIS COUNTRY FORWARD OUT OF THE MIRE OF CENTURIES OF FEUDAL SLUDGE). THEREFORE, THE KHALAIS CLEARLY REGARD THIS COURSE OF ACTION AS A LAST RESORT. THAT TIME HAS NOT YET ARRIVED.

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